

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 COME-00 STR-07 L-03 OMB-01

TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 CTME-00 /040 W

-----009117 170112Z /64

R 161636Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0511

INFO USDA/FAS WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, CS

SUBJECT: COFFEE: EXPORT PRICE POLICY

1. FOLLOWING THE MARCH 9-10 MEETING IN SAN SALVADOR OF REPRESENTATIVES OF EIGHT MILD PRODUCERS, COSTA RICA'S COFFEE OFFICE ANNOUNCED ON MARCH 13 A MINIMUM EXPORT PRICE REQUIREMENT OF US\$3.80 PER KILO (:"1.72 PER LB.) OF GREEN COFFEE. ONE LOCAL EXPORTER REPORTS THAT SOME 62 PERCENT OF EXPORTABLE PRODUCTION HAS BEEN SOLD AND THAT THE NEW PRICE POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED AFTER THE NEXT MEETING OF THE "OTHER MILDS" GROUP. REPORTEDLY THE MEETING HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 27 WITH NO DEFINITE MEETING LOCATION MENTIONED. ANOTHER EXPORTER REPORTS THAT WHILE THE PRICE REGULATION DOES NOT PROHIBIT EXPORTS, IT IS AN EFFECTIVE SALES BAN AS THE PRICE IS ABOVE THE CURRENT MARKET LEVEL.

2. COMMENT: TO DATE THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLICITY IN THE LOCAL PRESS CONCERNING THE MINIMUM PRICE REGISTRATION MEASURE BY THE COFFEE OFFICE. THIS LACK OF NEWS COVERAGE SEEMS TO CONFIRM THE STATEMENT MADE BY ONE EXPORTER WHO SAID THE EXPORT TRADE IS NEITHER HAPPY NOR UNHAPPY WITH THE MEASURE, BUT THAT THEIR FEELING IS ONE OF INDIFFERENCE. THE REAL STORY MAY LIE IN

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THE EXPORT SALES MADE DURING THE OCTOBER 24-FEBRUARY 7 PERIOD DURING WHICH A \$2.00 PER POUND MINIMUM REGISTRATION PRICE WAS REQUIRED BY THE COFFEE OFFICE. SALES REGISTRATIONS MADE DURING THE 3-MONTH NOV-JAN PERIOD TOTALED 354 THOUSAND BAGS FOR AN AVERAGE OF \$1.85 PER POUND. IT APPEARS THAT SOME FLEXIBILITY EXISTED IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE MINIMUM PRICE REQUIREMENT. THIS MAY

ALSO BE THE CASE WITH THE NEW REQUIREMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COFFEE, EXPORT PRICES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANJO01221
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780118-0270
Format: TEL
From: SAN JOSE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780360/aaaabyke.tel
Line Count: 64
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 60f0a1c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3308105
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: COFFEE: EXPORT PRICE POLICY
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, CS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/60f0a1c5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014